

Historical Background for the “*Raid on Rancho Peñasquitos*”

U.S.-Mexican War

Mention the U.S.-Mexican War and most Americans react with a glazed, questioning look. Mexicans, on the other hand, remember, passionately. When you mention the war south of the border, even a Mexican with a limited education will say, "Oh, the war where the Gringos stole our territory". The Americans say, "Which war?" The Mexican War was a critical conflict in the history of both nations. It redrew the map of North America, and forged a new identity for many, especially Mexican-Americans. Some 12,000 or 13,000 Americans and perhaps several times as many Mexicans died in the war--the first war the U.S. fought outside of its own territory. The U.S.-Mexican War helped ignite the passions of the Civil War -- though the war with Mexico has long been eclipsed in our popular memory by the Civil War, which followed only a dozen years later. Between 1846 and 1848, two neighbors, the United States and Mexico, went to war. It was a defining event for nations, transforming a continent and forging a new identity for its peoples. By the war's end, Mexico lost nearly half of its territory, the present American Southwest from Texas to California, and the United States became a continental power.

U.S.-Mexican War: California

The U.S. – Mexican War in California differed from other fronts. The Mexican government loosely ruled Alto California. This void of authority encouraged other imperial powers, such as Britain and even Russia to vie for this land of plenty. In the conquest of California, U. S. troops engaged the local militia, the Californios, not the Mexican troops. The Californios were skilled horsemen and expertly trained in the use of the lance. The lance without its iron tip was the tool the vaqueros used to drive their cattle.

U.S.-Mexican War: San Diego County

The bloodiest battle in the conquest of California took place right here in San Diego County. Traveling from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the First Dragoon's of the United States Army of the West, led by General Stephan Watts Kearny, confronted the Californios lancers in a bloody battle at the Valley of San Pasqual on December 6, 1846. The United States Dragoons suffered many casualties, and were surrounded by Californios on a hilltop, Mule Hill, in Rancho Bernardo for four days. Naval and Marine reinforcements arrived from San Diego to the relief of the wounded and starving Dragoons. When daylight came, the Californios faded away and the Americans resumed their march to San Diego. That night they camped at Rancho de los Penasquitos (this is the theme and location of our reenactment of the “*Raid on Rancho Penasquitos*”) and freely helped themselves to the supplies that they found there. Lieutenant Gray tried to control the Americans, but General Kearny intervened on behalf of his half-starved men. One of the sailors wrote in his diary that the Americans had cleaned out the rancho's larder better than a swarm of locusts could have done. Late in the afternoon of December 12, Kearny's force finally reached San Diego. Commodore Stockton met them at the edge of Old Town and invited Kearny to share his own quarters in the Casa de Bandini. Although the war for California was won by the United States, the Battle of San Pasqual proved to be an important victory for the Californios.

Raid on Ranch Peñasquitos Schedule of Events

Saturday, September 23 – Day 1

10:30 am	Historical commentary/Introduction
11:00 am	Reenactment of the Raid on Rancho Penasquitos
11:15 am	Camp Set-up/ Field Hospital Demonstration
11:30 am	Musket & Cannon Demonstrations
12 Noon	Feast of the Rancho / ACWS Brass Band Concert
12:30 pm	Fashion Show
1:30 pm	Mounted Californio Lancers & Saber Demonstration
2:00 pm	Historical commentary/Introduction
2:30 pm	Reenactment of the Raid on Rancho Penasquitos
2:45 pm	Camp Set-up/ Field Hospital Demonstration
3:00 pm	Musket & Cannon Demonstrations
3:30 pm	ACWS Brass Band Concert
4:00 pm	Mounted Californio Lancers & Saber Demonstration
4:30 pm	March & Drill/ Musket & Cannon Demonstrations

Sunday, September 24 – Day 2

10:30 am	Historical commentary/Introduction
11:00 am	Reenactment of the Raid on Rancho Penasquitos
11:15 am	Camp Set-up/ Field Hospital Demonstration
11:30 am	Musket & Cannon Demonstrations
12 Noon	Feast of the Rancho / ACWS Brass Band Concert
12:30 pm	Los Californios
1:30 pm	Mounted Californio Lancers & Saber Demonstration
2:00 pm	Historical commentary/Introduction
2:30 pm	Reenactment of the Raid on Rancho Penasquitos
2:45 pm	Camp Set-up/ Field Hospital Demonstration
3:00 pm	ACWS Brass Band Concert
3:30 pm	Closing Ceremony – Cannon Demonstration

* All day both days – Living history, salsa making, and wagon rides

Event Participants:

The Frontier Army of the West
Company C, 1st Dragoon Reenactors
1846 US Marines
Naval Historical Education Foundation
Los Californios
Happy Trails Stables
American Civil War Society Brass Band
American Civil War Society Hospital Corps
Los Californios Singers
A Stitch Out of Time

Sponsored by:

1 Company, 2nd U.S. Cavalry



The Frontier Army of the West



Be sure to watch the History Channel's US-Mexican War Documentary filmed at this location featuring reenactors from this event on Friday, September 29 at 8pm.

**For information please call (858) 484-7504
or (858) 695-1579 ~ www.sdparks.org**

“Raid on Rancho Peñasquitos”

A living history reenactment of General Kearny and his troops marching to the Rancho de los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House during the US-Mexican War on December 11, 1846



**Saturday September 23, 10am to 5pm
Sunday September 24, 10am to 3pm**

**Los Peñasquitos Adobe Ranch House
12122 Canyonside Park Drive, San Diego
(at the end of Canyonside Park Dr.)**

Witness 1840's U.S. Dragoons, Sailors, and Marines march on and secure the rancho, set up camp, and raid the adobe kitchen. Watch cavalry, cannon, and tactical drills. Visit the field hospital. Listen to period music and Californio singers plus enjoy other activities.